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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4574
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1741
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1297
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2141
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1483
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0764

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA -- SENATOR KERRY DISCUSSES BURMA WITH
PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO

Classified By: Ambassador Cameron R. Hume, reasons 1.4(b-d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Senator Kerry expressed concern about the Burmese situation in a meeting with President Yudhoyono on December 10. Yudhoyono noted that he was also concerned and had urged the regime to take needed steps, but ASEAN had limited influence and needed U.S. help to push China and India to take positive approaches. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On December 10, Senator Kerry--while in Bali for the UN's Climate Change conference--raised the subject of Burma with President Yudhoyono. Ambassador Hume was also in the meeting. Kerry said he shared the concern of many Americans regarding the situation in Burma. The use of violence against demonstrators, the lack of political dialogue, and the worsening economic and social conditions were all symptoms of a deepening crisis. Despite efforts by the U.S. and other countries, so far international action had been ineffective. He asked President Yudhoyono how he viewed the crisis in Burma.

13. (C) Yudhoyono said he was worried about Burma. Indonesia had historical connections with Burma, but the level of bilateral trade and the overall relationship was insignificant at this point. Others, especially India and China, had the crucial connections to Burma. He had written several times to strongman Than Shwe, urging that he plan a transition to a democratic government. The responses he had received did not show any progress in the approach of the Burmese authorities. Nevertheless, Yudhoyono said Indonesia would continue to work on this issue--along with its ASEAN partners--among whom there was general agreement that Burma needed to prepare a transition to a democratic, moderate government.

14. (C) In his comments to Senator Kerry, Yudhoyono also cautioned that ASEAN had limited influence. As it pushed Burma, India and particularly China protected the regime, weakening Burma's ties to ASEAN and the outside world. He appreciated the stance of the United States in pushing for change in Burma, but he said ASEAN would need help in convincing both China and India to cooperate. It was not in anyone's interest just to push the Burmese generals deeper into the protective embrace of Beijing. He asked that the USG help generate positive change in the approaches of India and China.

